
IX. School Programs

Tobacco-Related School Curriculum

Because most tobacco users start before age 18, school programs designed to prevent the initiation of tobacco use are a crucial component of a tobacco control program. Youth who have not tried tobacco should be enabled to continue abstaining, and youth who have experimented or become regular users of tobacco should have help quitting.

Learning refusal skills in school:

Students were asked if they had practiced ways to say ‘no’ to tobacco use in school via role playing or other programs. Many students are unsure whether they have discussed this issue in school, and only about half of middle school students (**55.5%**) reported that they had practiced ways to say no to tobacco use in class.

Table 28: Proportion of Students Who Have Practiced Refusal Skills in School

Type of Tobacco Use	Yes	No	Not sure
Cigarettes or smokeless tobacco	62.4%	19.6%	18.0%
Cigarettes or smokeless tobacco in betelnut	55.5%	22.7%	21.7%

Tobacco use on school property:

To enable schools to prevent tobacco use among youth, it is also necessary to measure and monitor adherence to school policies prohibiting tobacco use on school property.

6.3% of students in grades 6-8 had smoked cigarettes on school property on one or more of the past 30 days. **10.9%** had used smokeless/chewing tobacco, and **37.0%** had used betelnut with or without tobacco on school property in the past 30 days. These numbers are very similar to those reported by high school students, suggesting that even in middle schools, prohibitions on tobacco and betelnut use on school property are not being communicated or enforced.